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REPORT RAPID BULGARIAN REARMAMENT;  
CELEBRATE ARMY SPORTS MATCHES

NEW MILITARY MEASURES TAKEN -- Neue Zuercher Zeitung, 29 Sep 50

The rearmament of Bulgaria is proceeding at a rapid tempo, especially now that the Soviet General Petur Panchevski, who is of Bulgarian descent, has become Defense Minister. Soviet specialists are active in the Bulgarian Army.

Principal attention is being given to building up the transportation and communications systems. Soviet "technicians" are spurring the Bulgarians to the greatest efforts in railroad transportation through "advice and assistance." These "specialists" remind one of those German forerunners who appeared in the country before Bulgaria joined the Axis.

Special importance is being placed on the improvement of connections across the Danube to Rumania and the Soviet Union. Recently, a new ferry across the Danube between Calafat and Vidin was inaugurated in the presence of a large number of official personages. It cannot be ascertained from the meager official data whether this is a railroad ferry. At any rate, two permanent bridgeheads seem to have been built on the banks, indicating that the ferry is to handle a considerable volume of traffic. Moreover, from the military viewpoint the ferry has several advantages over a bridge. Above all, it offers a poorer target for aircraft; a ship can be easily concealed in the vicinity, while a bridge presents a fixed target. According to other reports, a bridge is to be built across the Danube at Nikopol.

Bulgaria apparently has recently received new war material from the Soviet Union. On the occasion of a parade in Sofia on 9 September, large Soviet tanks attracted the attention of the spectators. Intensive air defense preparations are observed in the capital. A ring of antiaircraft batteries is said to be concentrated around Sofia. Air-raid shelters have had to be put back into a condition of readiness, and sand is said to have been placed in the top floors ready for use. The most important art treasures have been placed for safekeeping in "bombproof" cellars.

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It is also heard that parts of certain ministries have been transferred from the capital. A section of the Defense Ministry is said to be already in Gabrovo; another, which handles liaison with the Soviet Union, is said to be in Kolarovgrad. The Kolarovgrad region is one of those from which the Turks are said to have been expelled. A part of the Ministry of the Interior is said to have been transferred to the outskirts of Sofia. All these measures could be interpreted as preparation for war.

SPORTS MATCHES HELD -- Sofia, Izgrev, 17 Aug 50

The traditional Army Matches in light athletics were solemnly inaugurated on 16 August 1950 at the Narodni Voyska (National Army) Stadium in Sofia by the chief of the political command of the army, Major General M. Khristov. The contestants marched in front of the Army High Command and a large audience.

Gymnastic competitions are being held simultaneously with the light athletics matches, and will continue for the next few days. Admission is free.

AWARD NEW BANNER TO INFANTRY DIVISION -- Sofia, Rabotnichesko Delo, 8 Sep 50

At a celebration held on 7 September 1950 on the grounds of the First Infantry Division named after Stalin, Prime Minister Vulko Chervenkov presented the unit with a new combat banner. The Prime Minister read the relevant decree of the National Assembly, after which the men and officers knelt to pronounce the solemn oath and then paraded in front of the Prime Minister, Lt Gen P. Panchevski, Maj Gen M. Khristov, and others present at the ceremony.

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